Creating and Publishing a WordPress Blog

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About The Author

After working for nearly 30 years in a challenging technological environment, Brian Stephens now lives and works in the Languedoc Roussillon region of Southern France. Since moving to France he has been involved with developing a new web design business which is supplemented by his Internet marketing and blog writing activities.

Brian has created and published a number of blogs on the Internet using both the free blogger platform provided by Google and by registering his own domains to support his independent WordPress blogs.

This eBook has been written to provide a step by step procedure which can be used as a general guide to anyone who wants to register their own domain name, create a new WordPress blog and publish it independently on the Internet.

There are many benefits to taking this approach when blog writing, not least of which is maintaining full ownership over the content material and value of the blog.

Using and Sharing this eBook

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Domain Registration

The process of registering a domain name in terms of physically going on line and making a purchase is actually relatively straight forward. The hard part is coming up with a unique name that is likely to attract traffic to your site. Making the name match a high inquiry search term is one means of attracting traffic, particularly if there is not a high level of competition for the term selected. For advice on how to choose a domain name visit 'A Good Time is Blog Time' and look under the category Keyword Optimization.

Once you have decided on a domain name you will want to find out if it is available and how much it costs.

My favorite place for registering domain names is:

This is a UK based company that offers all the standard tld's (top level domain) such as .com, .co,.uk, .eu etc. All you need to do is to enter the domain name you want after the www. in the search box and click on search. The results will show you what is available, what is taken and how much the TLD costs. Cost depends on the type of TLD and the number of years you are paying for before the registration needs to be renewed. Note: you do not actually own the domain name and if you do not renew at the required time, it can be sold on to a 3rd party

Check the option you require next to select and click on 'add to basket' , remember to uncheck any you don't want.

When you are ready to pay click on 'Go to Checkout', and follow the payment instructions.

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Remember not to include a tld as part of the name if you want a full list of available options, only select them using the check boxes after you done your search.

If the results indicate that a domain is already taken but can be transferred that just means someone owns it but that the domain registration can be transferred to 123-reg. So if you are not the owner then you obviously cannot transfer it.

If you prefer to register a domain in Europe or the USA then two good options are:

- http://www.europeregistry.com/ for Europe
- http://www.godaddy.com/ for the USA

The process for finding available top level domain names is pretty much the same wherever you choose to register but the controlling body will be different and there may be some local requirements that have to be fulfilled to register some of the specific options.

Note: depending on the host you decide to use you may need to redirect the domain name to different named servers than the ones allocated. This is so that when the hosting company you eventually select is used, that the website can be found via its URL.

The named server is effectively the address for the physical location of the files on the server of the host you choose.

Also bear in mind that search engines tend to return sites registered in a particular country's search results ahead of sites registered elsewhere. So if you are targeting a particular geographic location it's a good idea to register your site in that location.

My preferred host is a company called Hostgator and you can see my reasons why by clicking on their name which I have made into a link.

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123-reg is another excellent 'value for money' domain registration option but was not originally considered to be as well suited to hosting for blogs as say HostGator who are my number one hosting choice and one that meets all the hosting requirements you are ever likely to need as a blogger, or website designer for that matter.

123-reg have now upgraded some of their hosting options and their 'Plus' package does now offer 1 click WordPress support, so for simplicity's sake you may decide that using them for your hosting is a good option, your choice at the end of the day.

The package is certainly affordable and you don't need to redirect the named servers if you decide to both register your domain with them and host with them.

Remember when you purchase your hosting, to keep a note of the user name you select and your password as you will need these to access the control panel at a later time.

They should be sent to you via an email from your company of choice, but it is a good idea to make a note of them in hard copy as well, just in case something goes wrong with your PC or you lose the email.

Have a look at the web hosting options available on the next page and then make your decision as to which domain registration and web hosting package is the best for you.

If you decide to go with an alternative hosting package, then make sure it offers all the tools that you will need as a blogger, including a simple means of installing Wordpress .

Specifically a means of creating your blog and then a means of updating and maintaining it, ideally beyond standard features.

Web Hosting Options

The first hosting package of choice is HostGator:

A key feature of any web hosting package you choose for blogging is that you have access to the 'Fantastico' function that comes as a part of 'Control Panel'.

Fantastico is the 'control panel' feature that is used to upload the WordPress functionality onto your hosting server under the domain name you have selected and makes the process of creating and setting up your WordPress blog very easy.

Without going into too much detail, there are other features that will also be required such as .php support for example, so selecting the recommended web hosting suppliers will mean that you can be pretty confident all your blogging needs will be met.

It is worth noting that for HostGator the prices offered per month are only typically available if you purchase 3 years in advance. If you find that a little daunting then you may want to consider going through a reseller hosting service that offers the same facilities but usually at a reduced rate or time period. Bit like using a retailer rather than a wholesaler.

123-reg is also a good value for money hosting package as long as you are not overly concerned with having the control panel option available. Certainly the one click WordPress feature makes creating a WordPress blog pretty straightforward and removes the need for using Fantastico via the control panel.

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Getting Your Blog Published

Assuming you have chosen to register your blog domain name and host it on 'Hostgator', the next stage is to create a WordPress blog using the Fantastico facility available through the control panel that comes as a part of your package.

To access the control panel you type your domain name into the address bar of your browser e.g. http:// then yourdomain.com/cpanel and press return.

Next you will get a login box:
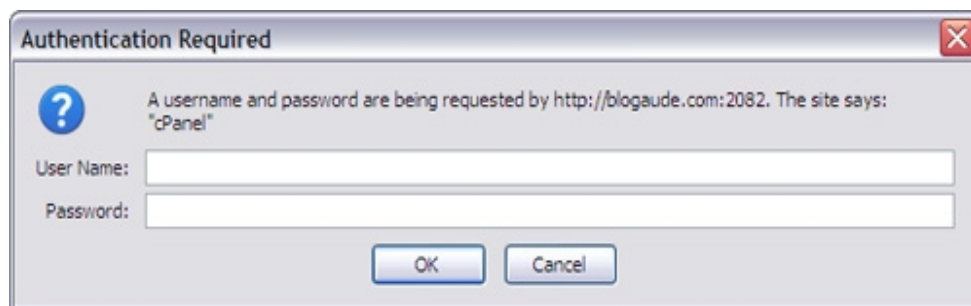
You need to enter the user name and password that you created when you purchased the hosting package. Then click on 'OK'.

The control panel will open and you will get a screen asking if you need help, just click on 'No I'm fine'.

Now you can scroll down to find the 'Software/Services' box which contains the 'Fantastico De Luxe' icon.

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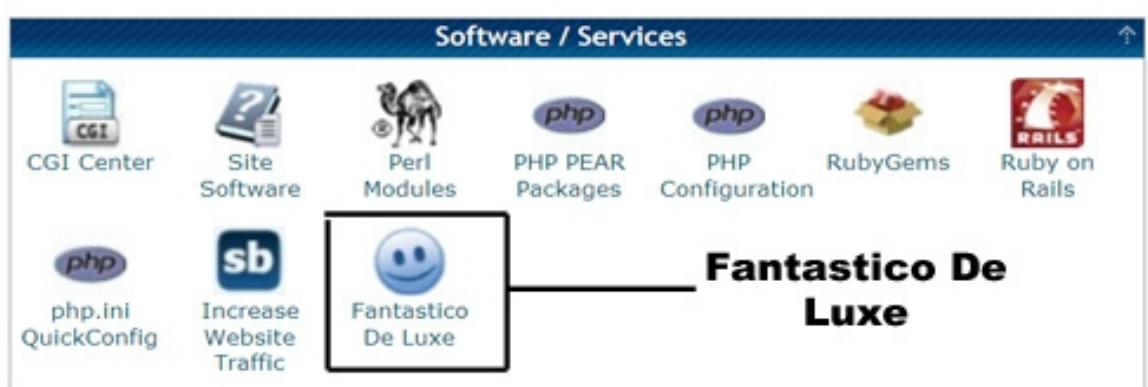
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Click on the 'Fantastico' icon to open the next screen.

Click on 'Wordpress' under the 'Blogs' section.

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On the next screen you need to click on the 'new installation option.

When you click on new installation you will get a form to fill in, complete the form as follows:

Leave the directory box blank so that the blog gets installed directly under your main domain directory.

Create an 'admin' name and 'password'.

Assign a suitable 'nickname' to suit your preference.

Once you have done this, you are ready to install.

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Click on 'Install WordPress'

At the next screen you just click on 'Finish Installation' and you are done.
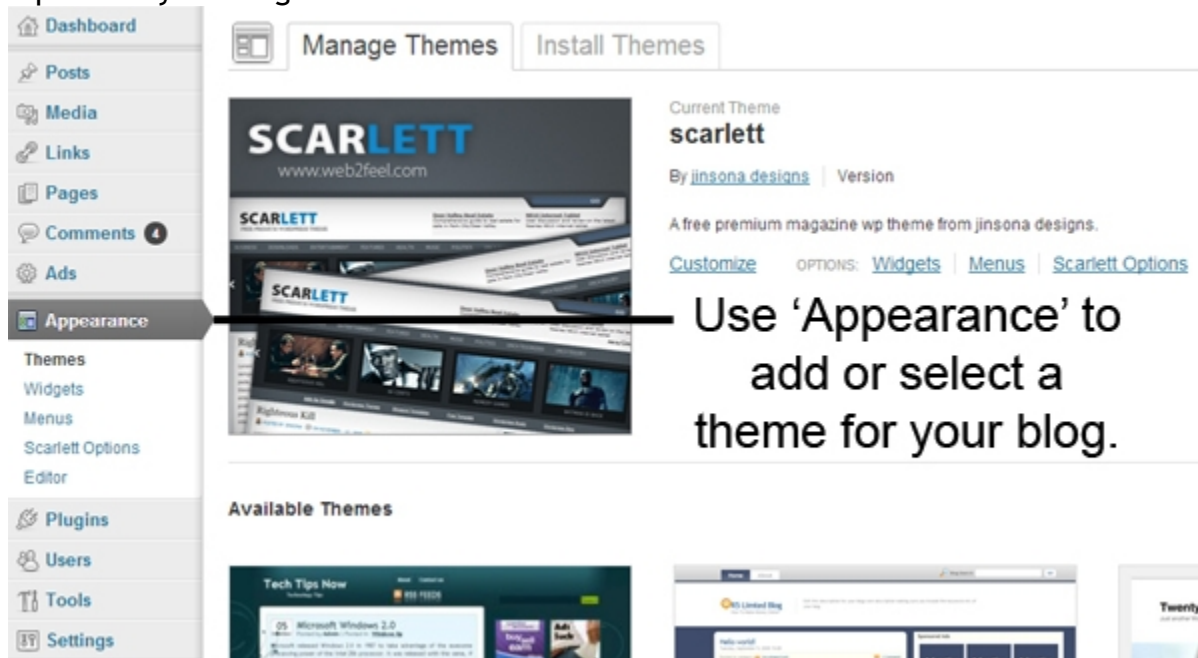
Using the WP-Admin Function

Once you have WordPress installed you can now access the WP-Admin function via your web browser. Enter your domain name in the URL address bar of your browser as you did to access control panel but this time instead of typing '/cpanel' you type '/wp-admin' as the suffix. This will take you to the WP login, enter the user name and password you created when installing WordPress earlier, you can check 'remember me' as well if you want to for future access. Then click 'Log In'.

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At the next screen the area you are interested in is the 'Appearance' box, this is where you can add more themes, select a theme of choice and adopt it for your blog.

If you select the'Install Themes' tab next to manage themes, you will get a search option which you can use to find additional themes. It actually allows you to select from a list of features you would like by clicking the check boxes. This is a bit hit or miss, sometimes you get the results you were looking for and other times you don't.

If you don't find what you are looking for, you can use a search engine and look for 'free WordPress templates', you will find absolutely loads of themes to choose from. The norm is that you can view and download a theme that grabs your imagination. Then all you have to do is upload it to your server so that you can activate it as your live option. The files are normally all in a zipped up folder which Wordpress can 'upload' and then automatically install, all from the 'Install Themes' tab.

The Long Way of Getting
a New Theme onto Your Server

When you find your new theme and download it to your PC, it will be normally be saved as a .zip file. Go to the directory you downloaded it to using 'Windows Explorer' and double click the .zip file to open it up. You should then be able to see the folder that contains the theme files. Use the 'Extract all files' option to place the folder in a location you can find, 'temp' is a good choice.
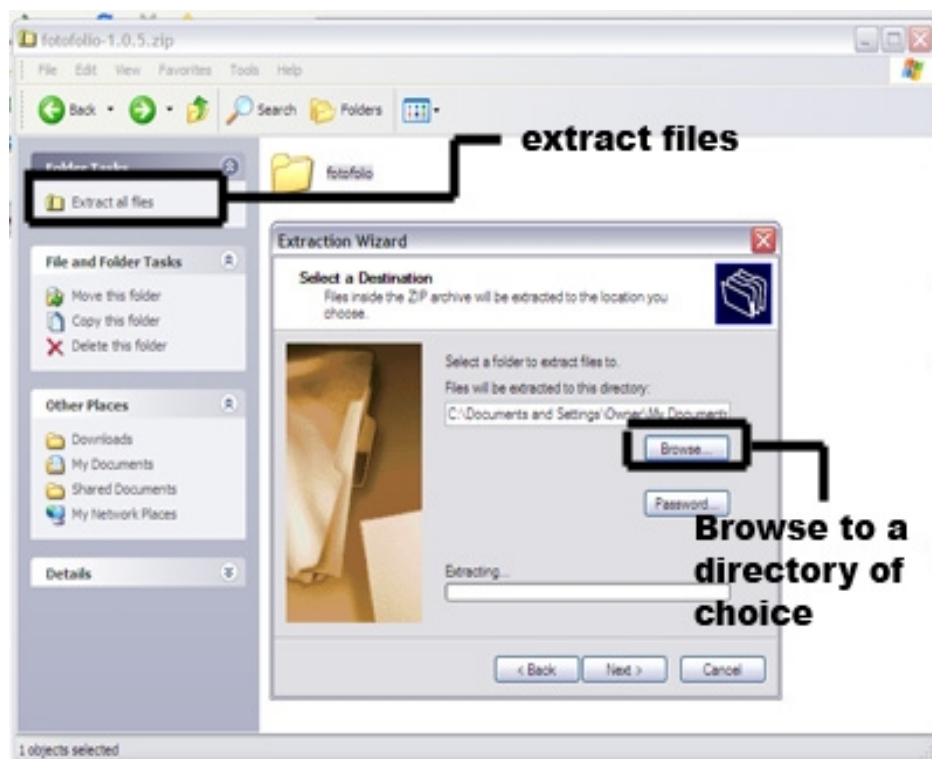
Now you can use Cpanel to upload the directory to your server.

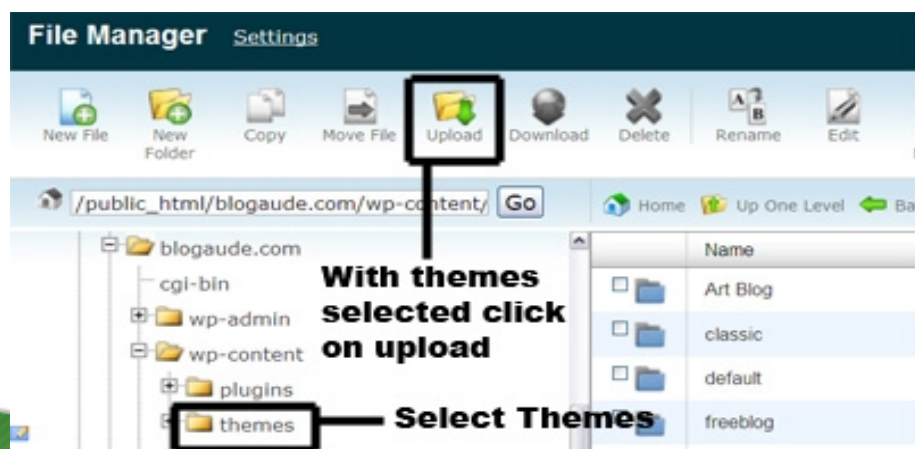# Creating and Publishing a WordPress Blog

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Access Cpanel as previously
described using the '/cpanel' suffix in
you browser address bar. This time you will be
using the 'Files' option and specifically 'File Manager

Navigate to your domain directory, the path is normally:
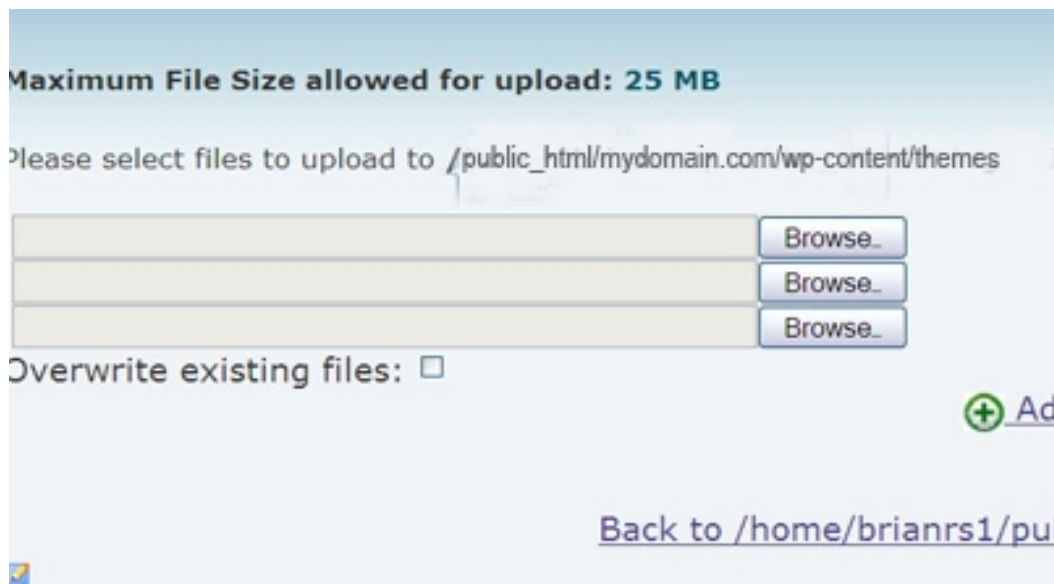
public_html/yourdomain.com/wp-content/themes/

This is the directory you want to be in to upload your new theme. Now all you do is click
on 'Upload'

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Use the 'Browse' option to locate the
extracted directory for your chosen theme,
select it and click on 'Open'. The file will now upload
into the 'themes' directory. Use the 'Back to' option to go back
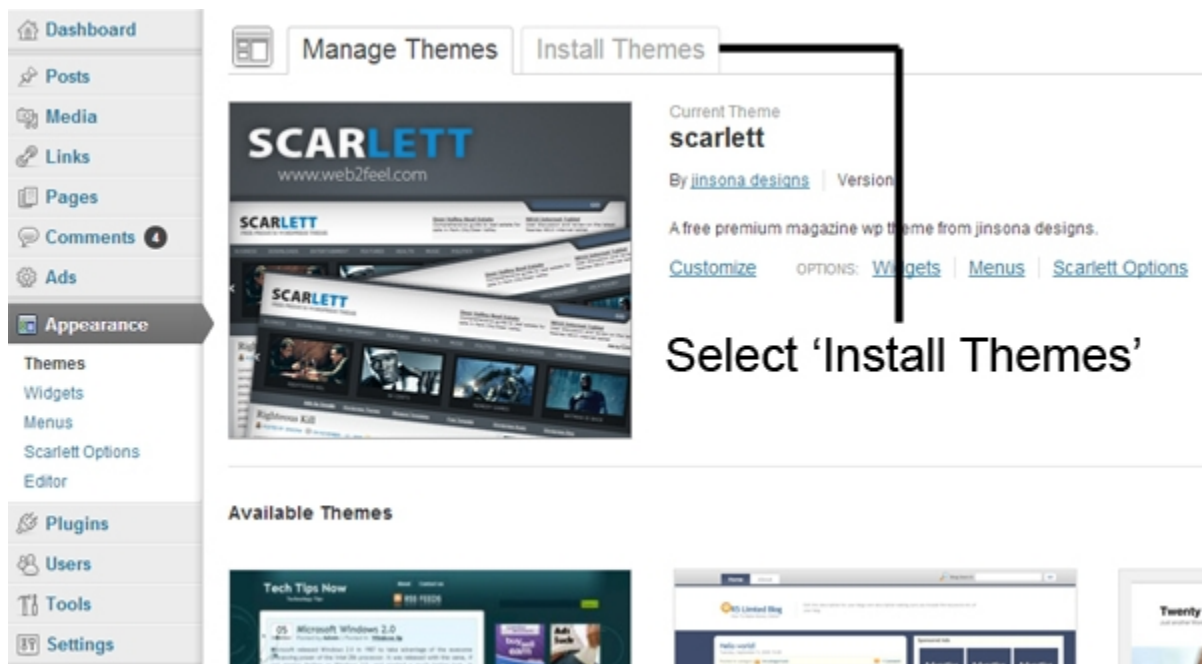to file manager and check the files are in fact there.

That is it, you can now return to the wp-admin screen and select the theme from the available options.

OK I admit it, there is a quicker and much easier way to get a .zip file onto your server, which I will now tell you about. But this has been a very useful exercise as it has demonstrated to you how you go about getting any file you want onto your server. For example if you wanted to offer an eBook you could upload the file using this method and provide a URL path to it. There are also lots of other reasons why you might want to add content to your blog in this way. So knowing how to do it this way is very useful.

The Quick Way to Upload a New Theme

Now select upload

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When you click on upload you get
a 'Browse' option. Navigate to the .zip file and
select 'Open' then click on 'Install Now'.

Install Themes

Search | **Upload** | Featured | Newest | Recently Updated

Install a theme in .zip format

If you have a theme in a .zip format, you may install it by uploading it here.

[Browse..] (Install Now)
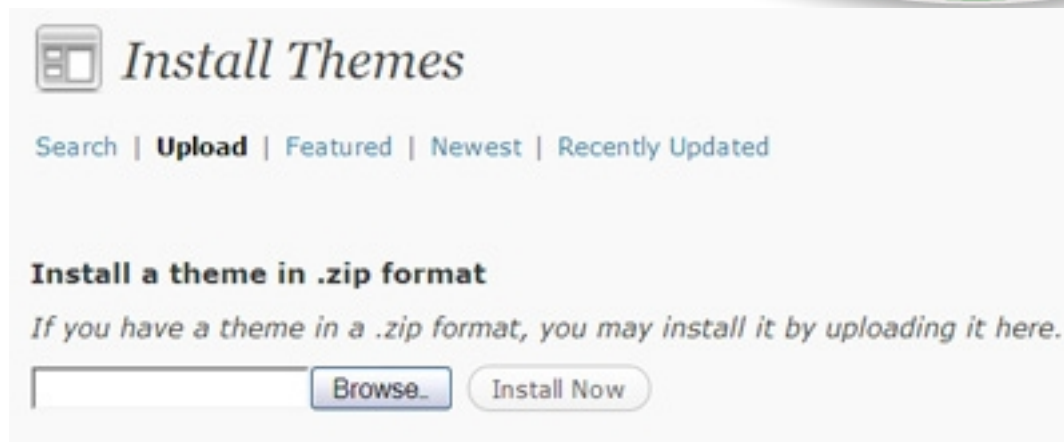
The program will extract the files and place them in your theme options, you can then
click 'activate' to make it the current theme.

Fotofolio 1.0.5 by Wordspop.com

*Wordpress Theme for Photography
lovers, Graphic Designers, of even a
Drawer. By: Pupung Budi Purnama.*

Activate | Preview | Delete

All of this theme's files are located in
/themes/fotofolio .

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So yes this is a very good choice for uploading the various options that are configured for WordPress blogs. Adding new plugins can often be done this way also; or you can search for them in the add new screen.

If you want to find out more about customising your theme further you can find out how to do that by visiting How to Customise WordPress Themes

General Settings and Recommendations

Once you have your blog installed it is worth taking some time to work through the Settings options and configure your set up.

General
This is fairly intuitive just make sure you have filled in all the boxes and set the fields as required. In the 'Tagline' description try and include your primary keyword phrase for the blog.

Writing
It is a good idea to check the XML-RPC box if you want to automate adding posts via a 3rd party software package. Doesn't hurt to do this even if you decide you are not going to use it.

Under 'Update Services' you can add ping details, this means these services will be automatically updated when you post on your blog. The list below is a good sample of services.

http://rpc.pingomatic.com/   http://rpc.technorati.com/rpc/ping
http://blogsearch.google.com/ping/RPC2   http://api.my.yahoo.com/RPC2
http://ping.feedburner.com   http://ping.weblogalot.com/rpc.php

You may need to register with some of these services for them to work, others will accept the ping without registration so to be sure it would be worth taking a little time to register. You can then also enhance your web profile by registering and participating with some of the better known sites.

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Reading
This can be arranged as per your preferences,
some people decide to only show 1 post per page for
example.

Discussion
Again configure as per your requirements but note that moderating comments is always a good idea. Spammers will have a field day with you if you allow comments without moderation and you could end up with links to all sorts of unsavory sites.

Set the notification to tell you when you receive a comment so you can have a look see what it is. If you find your self being bombarded by a specific type of comment then you should be able to use the blacklist to block it.

Media
As per your requirements

Privacy
Select the option you want but remember if you are trying to reach the public then you need to select 'visible to everyone'.

Permalinks
This is where you can decide the naming convention for your blog posts, if you want the post title to be used you can put */%postname%/* in the 'Custom Structure' box and then of course you need to ensure this option is selected.

Miscellaneous
As per your requirements

Useful Plugins

Askimet – By Matt Mullenweg | Visit plugin site

All in One SEO Pack – By Michael Torbert | Visit plugin site

CommentLuv – By Andy Bailey | Visit plugin site

Evermore - Bennett McElwee | Visit plugin site

Share This - By ShareThis | Visit plugin site

Top Commentators Widget – By Lorna Timbah (WebGrrrl.net) | Visit plugin site

Where to Find Great WordPress Themes

One of my favorite places for free WordPress themes is wordpressthemesbase.com You will get lots of fresh new themes to choose from and to ensure that you get a unique look to your blog you can always edit the theme for different colours and fonts etc. Just make sure you leave the information detailing the source of the theme so that you don't break the copyright rules.

Another great source is freewpthemes.net

Blogging Tools

PhotoShop – all bloggers should utilise some sort of graphics editing package to make the images you want more interesting and on topic. The recommended package is an industry standard and you can find out more about it on A Good Time is Blog Time.

Pointing Your Domain at a Different Named Server in 123-Reg

If you decided to use Hostgator to host your blog and 123-Reg for your 'domain registration', you will need to change the named servers for your domain. To do this go to 123-Reg.co.uk and logon to your control panel. Once in the control panel you select your domain name from the drop down menu and then click on 'Manage'.
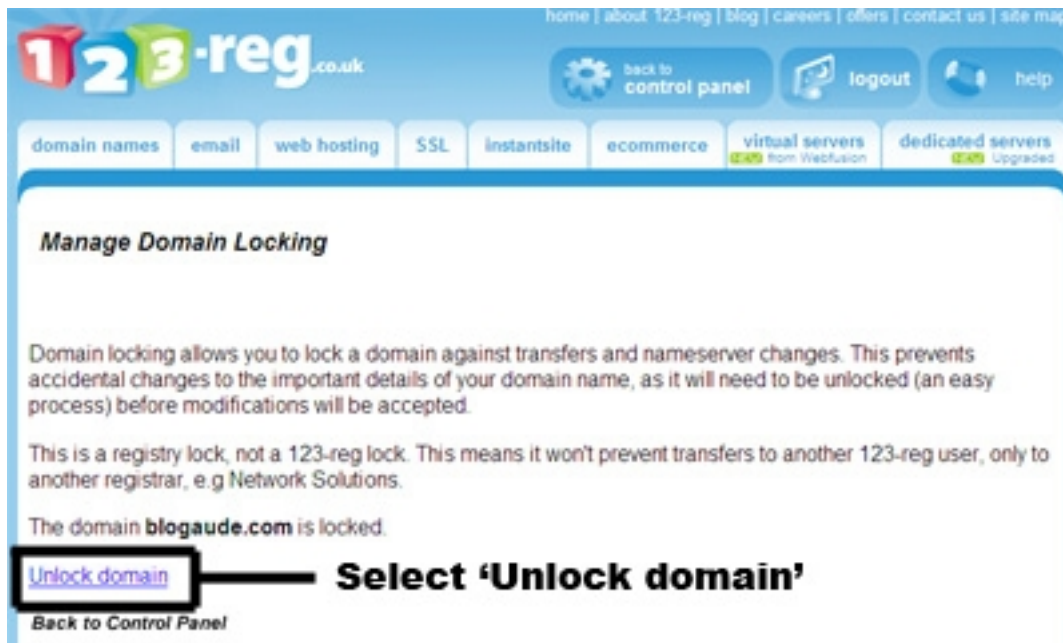

Before you can change the nameserver you will need to unlock the domain, so click on 'Manage Domain Locking'.

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As long as you had the correct domain name
selected when you started, you can now select
'Unlock Domain' and then click 'Back to Control Panel'

You can now select 'Change Nameserver'

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All you need to do is to change the 2 nameservers in the boxes to the ones that you have been given by Hostgator and then click on 'Change Namservers'.

Once you have done that scroll to the bottom of the page, click on 'Back to Control Panel' and then go back into the Manage Domain Locking and select 'Lock Domain'. The changes should then take place within 48 hours of you making the change.

So you can now log out and you will have your domain registered on 123-Reg and your blog hosted on Hostgator, a winning combination I think. Oh and by the way you will be live on the Internet so it is time to start posting. You do this in the 'wp-admin' screen under 'posts' and by selecting 'Add New'. As you are new to blogging it will probably be best to use the 'Visual' tab to write your posts as this is very similar to a word processor.

'HAVE A GOOD TIME BLOGGING'because A Good Time is Blog Time